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ABSTRACT

A documents librarian from an American University interviewed eight librarians in Canberra in April 1977 to gather information on Australian government publications and recent developments in their bibliographic control. This report gives descriptions for the following: (1) Australian Government Publishing Services (AGPS) and the agencies receiving the monthly and weekly catalogs produced under its imprint; (2) research and information services and bi-weekly indexes provided by the Parliamentary Library; and (3) responsibilities of the National Library for bibliographic control of government publications and the various bibliographies produced under its auspices. The ALERT services at the Parliamentary Library, flextime hours at the National Library, and fringe benefits of working for the Australian Public Services are also briefly reviewed in the report. (JPF)

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FIELD REPORT FROM AUSTRALIA

BY

Betty J. Hopkins

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FIELD REPORT FROM AUSTRALIA

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This is a report on a study of Australian government pulications and recent developments in their bibliographical control. The study was conducted through interviews in Canberra April 14 - 22, 1977. My sincere gratitude to Averill M. B. Edwards, the liaison librarian, Australian National Library, based in Washington, D.C.--who helped me to make the first contacts in Canberra. And many thanks to all of those in Canberra who took time out from their schedules to talk with me about publishing and libraries in their part of the world:

Australian Government Publishing Service	C. Hemingway, A/g Director Janice Hamilton, Librarian
National Library of Australia	Jan Fullerton, Chief Cataloger Ian Royal, Chief, Selection, Acquisition and Processing Dept. Marie Sexton, Principal Librarian, National Bibliography Section Elizabeth Stone, Chief Reference Librarian
Parliamentary Library	John Brudenall, Principal Librarian, Legislative Reference Service

While my interest was focused on Australian government publications and their bibliographical control, I have included some notes on peripheral subjects: the ALERT services at the Parliamentary Library; flextime at the National Library of Australia; and a few of the fringe benefits of working for the Australian Public Service.

Australia in Perspective

Australia is approximately the size of the contiguous United States, but only 6% of its land is arable. The present population is less than 14 million

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compared to over 215 million in the United States. 1975 comparisons of gross national product and per capita income: Australia $83 billion and $6,050; United States $1,516 billion and $7,100.[1] While the first settlement in Sydney dates from 1788, the Commonwealth of Australia is a relatively young government, formed by a federation of six colonies in 1901. Canberra was chosen as the site of the capital in 1909 and Parliament House opened in 1927. The Parliament is bicameral with a 64 member Senate and a House of Representatives with 127 members. The Prime Minister and Cabinet are responsible to the to the House; the Judiciary is independent.[2]

Australian Government Publishing Service

In a 1970 reorganization, the Australian Government Printing Office became the Australian Government Publishing Service. The Publishing Service is reponsible for publishing and printing the Commonwealth government publications. It acts as a sales agent for its own, and for selected titles published by other government agencies. (As in the United States, some government departments publish their own titles.) Also in its capacity as sales agent, the Publishing Service operates seven bookshops in the capital cities of Australia.

The number of parliamentary bills and debates printed is standardized according to need--333 copies for Parliament plus copies for departmental officials. The Publishing Service decides on the number of copies of departmental titles which should be printed. The decision is based on the number of copies which can be expected to sell. The printing itself is not all done at the AGPS plant. In fact, about 70% goes out to private firms on bids.

The National Library is designated by law to receive copies of all titles published in Australia. The Publishing Service therefore sends its publications to the National Library. There is no depository library law or distri-

bution system for government publications. However, as a courtesy, AGPS distributes its publications to the six State libraries, and to eighteen universities in the Commonwealth.

Australian government publications are copyrighted, and may not be reproduced without prior permission unless there is a specific statement to the contrary in the publication itself. Inquiries on permission should be addressed to the Director of Publishing.

CATALOGS

The Australian Government Publishing Service publishes both a weekly and a monthly list of documents. These are printed out from computer stored entries. Computer indexing began in July 1976. Catalog entry preparation is done by one librarian and her para-professional assistant who comprise the library staff of AGPS. The indexing is done on work sheets, then batched for entry, rather than on line. Full bibliographic data is entered for the titles of the weekly and monthly lists. There is no special classification scheme for Australian government documents, such as the SuDocs classification supplied by the U.S. Government Printing Office. The entries for both sales and non-sales items are put on a microfiche list which will cumulate for two years.

The monthly list, published since 1965, was formerly titled Australian Government Publications. This caused some confusion, since that title is used by the National Library for its catalog which includes both state and federal documents. So in April 1976, the Publishing Service changed its catalog title to Monthly List of Publications Placed on Sale. The Monthly List includes only sales publications. Since AGPS is a sales agent for

publications other than those documents carrying its own imprint, the Monthly List includes entries for these titles as well. For example, the Publishing Service stocks publications of other Australian government agencies, as the Bureau of Statistics; of semi-government units, such as university presses; of overseas governments, as Canada and New Zealand; and of international agencies, as UNESCO and FAO. Of the total 308 current entries in the April 1977 Monthly List 225 had the AGPS imprint, and of these, 48 were monographs, the remainder, bills and acts, and issues of serial titles. (Separate issues of periodicals as well as annual reports are listed.) There were 19 "Other Australian Government Publications," 16 monographs, and three periodicals. Arrangement in the Monthly List is by title under category of publication. The Weekly List includes both sales and non-sales items, but only titles carrying the AGPS imprint. Full bibliographical data is not printed out, although it is stored in the computer, as noted above. An annual cumulative edition is planned, and this cumulation will be from the Weekly List, not the Monthly. The first issue will cover six months only, July - Dec. 1976. The cumulation will have the full bibliographical data printed out. There is no index to either the Monthly or the Weekly List, nor do plans for the cumulation call for an index. Since it is the Weekly List which cumulates, federal documents without the AGPS imprint will not appear in the annual cumulation--unless the system is programmed to pull out the "Other Australian Government Publications" from the Monthly List.

The Parliamentary Library and the National Library of Australia

The Parliamentary Library and a Joint Library Committee were both established in 1901 during the first session of the Commonwealth Parliament. The Committee envisioned a library which would provide service to the whole nation.

The Parliamentary Library therefore had two roles, its services to Parliament and the establishment of a national library collection. In 1956 the Government formed the National Library Enquiry Committee which advised the establishment of a separate national library. The National Library Act was passed in 1960.[3]

The Parliamentary Library

The Parliamentary Library is located in Parliament House. It serves as a research and information service to the members of Parliament as well as a library. As is usual with libraries, the Parliamentary Library is running out of space. Storage, technical services, and some of the research operations have already been moved to other buildings. If and when a new Parliament House is built, there is the question of whether adequate space will be provided for the library to be centralized in that building.

Almost half of the total library staff work in the legislative Reference Service which includes General Reference, Subject Reference, Current Information, plus Technical Services--or the "library" part of the Parliamentary Library. Approximately a third of the total library staff belong to the legislative Research Service, which was established in 1966. Its staff of research officers are not librarians, but subject specialists who report to the Members of Parliament on subjects related to their legislative work.[4]

INDEXES AND THE ALERT SERVICE

The library prepares and distributes two annotated indexes to the members of Parliament. Both are bi-weekly. One is the Select List of Acquisitions prepared by the Technical Services Section. This is arranged by broad subject headings, with a separate list for fiction, and another for reference works, with a main entry index. The other index is by the ALERT staff. Called

ALERT, Index to Current Information, it indexes items from periodicals and government publications received by the Library. Arrangement is by subject, with a personal author list. The indexing is selective, emphasizing current issues.

The Library also has an ALERT service which is tailored to the individual Member's needs. An explanatory folder is sent to the Member which includes a "Profile Form." If he wishes to participate, the Member fills out the profile, stating his specific subject interests. A list of 57 examples of subjects covered by the Service is included on the form. Then an interview is arranged between the Member and one of the ALERT staff, so that the vocabulary set up for the search will pull the required information from the system. The Member will then receive a card service of abstracts. He can order the full text of any item, photocopy if under 50 pages, or loan if over 50 pages. The Member can make changes to the profile at any time, and once a session, the ALERT service asks if the profile should be modified. Current acquisitions of books, periodical articles, government documents and transcripts of current affairs broadcasts are all included in the service. In 1976, the Library received and scanned 7,000 periodical titles and 5,000 monographs.

The National Library

The National Library of Australia is only a short distance from Parliament House. The building was completed in 1968 and faces one of the proposed sites for the new Parliament complex. While the National Library has special responsibilities for services to the Parliament, its primary function is its service to the Australian people. Its General Reference and Reading Room and various special reading rooms are open to the public, but it is not a public lending library. The National Library serves the public indirectly, however, since it

is the center of the inter-library loan system of the nation. It maintains the national union catalogs of monographs, serials, and newspapers in which the holdings of 650 Australian libraries are recorded.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

The library is responsible for a number of Australian bibliographies. The Systems Development Section has developed computer data storage and retrieval, and the Australian National Bibliography is now computerized. Similar programs are being developed for other bibliographies, as Australian Government Publications, Australian Public Affairs Information Service, and Australian Maps.

Both Australian National Bibliography and Australian Government Publications date from 1961, and both list Australian government documents, federal and state. The former is a catalog of books and pamphlets published in Australia, and items about Australia published abroad. Frequency of publication has varied from the original monthly with annual cumulations to the present weekly classified list with author-title index; monthly cumulations with subject index added; two four month cumulations and a final annual cumulation. Australian Government Publications, first published as an annual catalog--arranged by issuing agency with an author-title-subject index--became a quarterly with an annual cumulation in 1971.[5] Although the National Library would like both catalogs to have a comprehensive list of Australian government publications, it has trouble in obtaining all the publications of the various states for listing. An experimental program of cooperative cataloging for the state publications may be set up in the near future. Tasmania initiated the idea by proposing to send its cataloging of Tasmanian publications to the National Library.

While the Australian Government Publishing Service sends its publications

to the National Library, Commonwealth publications with imprints other than AGPS can pose the same acquisitions problem as the state publications. The Selection, Acquisition and Processing Section of the National Library scans newspapers, magazines, and government releases, noting the work of government commissions, boards, etc. Relevant information is filed, the files are reviewed and kept up to date. If a government agency publishes a report which is not sent to the Library, the Section follows up and requests the publication.

Flextime at the National Library

The National Library adopted Flextime in 1975. The core times when staff must be present are 10:00 A.M. to 12 noon, and 2:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. Other than schedule requirements of their department, the staff can select the start, finish and lunch break time. Hours included in the Flextime day are from 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. A standard day is defined as 7 hours 21 minutes, and would start at 8:30 A.M. and end at 4:51 P.M. with the lunch break from 12:30 P.M. to 1:30 P.M. Under Flextime, the staff no longer has to work 7 hours 21 minutes each day. Instead, the concept is 70 hours and 30 minutes every 10 working days with the possibility of working 10 hours over during the period for credit, or 10 hours under. No more than 10 hours can be carried either as credit or debit.

Working for the Australian Public Service

The professional staff of the Parliamentary Library, the National Library, and the Australian Government Publishing Service are officers of the Australian Public Service. Research officers and administrative staff may take jobs in other branches of the government, and a librarian may decide to give up librarianship for a promotion to another position within the public service. The smaller the staff of any institution, the larger the turnover, as officers

qualified for better positions move out and up.

Four weeks is the standard vacation in Australia. Permanent officers receive a holiday bonus of 17 1/2% of four weeks pay each year. After 10 years of service, three months leave at full pay is granted. Called "furlough" or "long service leave," it can be taken for three months at full pay, or six months at half-pay. At the end of the first furlough period of 10 years, this type of leave accumulates at the rate of nine days a year.

Closing Comments

Bibliographical control of Australian government publications has improved greatly since 1961 when the National Library first issued Australian National Bibliography and Australian Government Publications. More frequent cumulation and a better format have resulted from recent computerization. The decision of the Australian Government Publishing Service to change the title of its sales catalog from Australian Government Publications to Monthly List of Publications Placed on Sale in 1976 will avoid the former confusion between its catalog and that of the National Library. A clear page layout and the subject category divisions make the Monthly List easy to search, and lack of an index poses no great hardship. However, if the present plan to omit indexing in the July - December 1976 cumulation is followed, its value as a bibliographical tool will be lowered. To date, the major bibliographical control of Australian government publications rests with the two catalogs of the National Library.

References

[1]Population and economic statistics are from United States. Office of Geographic and Cartographic Research. National Basic Intelligence Factbook. Washington: Central Intelligence Agency, 1977. 230 p. (pp. 9-10 & 29)

[2]Statistics on the Australian Parliament are from Commonwealth Government Directory, 1977. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1977. 321 p. (pp. 8, 11)

[3]Ibid., p. 49.

[4]For an authoritative history of the Parliamentary Library, see Moore, A. L., "Information for Parliaments: The Experience of the Australian Parliamentary Library," in Australian Library Journal, XXIV, 1975, pp. 191-195.

[5]Australian Government Publications, 1961- superseded an earlier catalog with the same title which was issued by the National Library from 1952-1960. For titles of other bibliographies issued prior to 1961, see Palic, Vladimir M., Government Publications, a Guide to Bibliographic Tools. 4th ed. Washington: Library of Congress, 1975. 441 p. For current information, see "Government Publications Grapevine," recently added as a feature in Australian Library Journal.